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REPORT OF THE CORRESPONDING SECRETARY 21

Brown*, California, Columbia, Indiana, Worcester Polytechnic, Purdue and Washington University (St. Louis) have not yet paid the assessment of March 3, 1914. On the basis of previous payments these back dues would return a little over \$240.00. On account of having sufficient funds to carry the Society through the past year the Treasurer has not called insistently upon the backward Chapters. Obviously, however, the balance in hand, \$248.45, when increased to about \$500.00 from the assessments now due, will not carry the Society through 1915 without a further call. Since the Treasurer has not been able to escape the knowledge that the recent assessments have been extremely unwelcome to some Chapters, the above phases of our finances should be understood.

Respectfully submitted,

JAMES F. KEMP, *Treasurer*.

December 26, 1914.

This is to certify that I have examined the Treasurer's Report covering the operations of Sigma Xi for the past fiscal year, and find that all balances check and are correct.

N. C. WHITMAN, *Auditor*.

January 16, 1915.

REPORT OF THE CORRESPONDING SECRETARY OF
THE SOCIETY OF THE SIGMA XI

TO THE ANNUAL CONVENTION HELD IN PHILADELPHIA,

DECEMBER 29, 1914

The marked spirit of research activity and its utilization in connection with various commercial organizations has afforded opportunities for the extension of Sigma Xi which might not have been suspected some years ago. A group of eight members connected with a large establishment for the manufacture of special machinery organized themselves informally in a club that met for scientific discussions regularly during the last year. The meetings were so successful that one of the members wrote seeking a list of all members of the Society residing in the vicinity of that plant. The QUARTERLY has heretofore circulated only among active members. Might not its wider circulation arouse and maintain more active interest in the ideals for which the Society stands, and would not the movement gain if it were also to be sent out among the inactive membership?

*January 25, 1915, the assessment of the Brown Chapter was paid.

The secretary is indebted to those members who at various times and from various places have sent all sorts of printed information concerning various chapters and members of the organization. Much that has been sent in would be of interest to other members of the Society but the time and energy involved in rewriting the data from newspaper clippings or college dailies, not to mention printed programs of various kinds, precludes the possibility of utilizing most of it. If members would send such information in the form of a brief record ready to print, then much could be used that now has to be passed by.

With the December issue was completed the second year of the SIGMA XI QUARTERLY, and it is appropriate to report to the Society what has been accomplished through this agency. Volume I contained 112 pages, and Volume II, 116 pages. The material included has been limited to matters specifically bearing upon the organization of the Society and its methods of procedure. The first number in each year has been utilized for the proceedings of the midwinter convention and corresponds thus rather closely to the pamphlet of the convention proceedings that has been issued for years by the Society. The last two numbers were occupied almost exclusively by reports and discussions concerning the proposed revision of the constitution. Other numbers have contained briefer articles on the ideals of the Society, the methods for the election of new members, the policy of the organization, the proposed dual membership, for what Sigma Xi stands, the value of the Society, the proposed alumni chapter. Lists of national officers and chapter officers, which were revised from number to number, and the chapter reports, complete the contents of the two volumes.

It is important that the attention of the Society in general should be called to the information that has been put in a permanent form in the shape of these chapter reports. In the eight numbers that comprise the two volumes there have been printed twenty-six such reports. No reports at all were printed from Brown, California, Case, Columbia, Syracuse, Washington University, and the University of Wisconsin. Two reports each have been printed from Chicago, Cornell, Illinois, Michigan, and Purdue. A single report has been printed from each of the chapters not named. In the first number of the QUARTERLY the editorial committee outlined the

method which should be followed in preparing the chapter reports, and the printed statement of the committee on this matter is worth citing:

"It is evident that they should be reasonably uniform. This problem has received careful attention since chapter reports are to include a list of elections, and the justification of elections in different chapters has been questioned somewhat sharply both by members and outsiders. It is with the view to answer such criticisms and to forestall them that the committee has suggested a definite form for presenting the facts concerning newly elected members. Each record will give the name and grade of membership as well as the particular contribution to knowledge which is the basis of the election. The criticism which has been made that the Society was not holding its standards and was distributing its honors too broadly must present itself strongly to anyone who reads the long list of elections in our chapters. Any such mere list of names suggests only the size of the institution, or possibly also, the generosity of the electors. When, however, this list is printed with a definite record of the work done by each candidate, it will serve to show the breadth of the work carried on at the institution as well as to demonstrate a reason for the individual election."

The secretary has received reports from a number of chapters which, under the instructions of the committee as expressed in this printed notice, he was compelled to return to those chapters or at least was unable to use in the *QUARTERLY* because they were not ready to print. The editorial committee felt clearly that the mere publication of any list of names would not be of any great service to the chapter or to the Society, and might easily arouse criticism where the basis of the election was not included in the individual case. For some reason it seemed difficult to bring this home to the individual secretaries, and in a few rare instances the chapter felt itself aggrieved at the action of the editorial board. Reports from the largest chapters, such as Cornell and Chicago, have been most admirable demonstrations of the fitness for membership manifested by the persons elected, as was shown by the definite evidence of original work accompanying each name. On the other hand, it is worthy of note that at least one chapter in its formal report, which was duly printed as sent in, confessed to a distinct violation of the terms of the constitution that require the publication of research work as a basis for faculty election. In that particular

case the chapter secretary stated explicitly that the candidate had not published anything but was going to do so.

The admirable presentation of widely varying practices in different chapters which were outlined in an article entitled "Taking Inventory", contributed by Professor Richtmyer of Cornell University in the last *QUARTERLY*, finds abundant confirmation in the individual chapter reports that have appeared from time to time. The secretary has been compelled to read these reports at least twice in connection with his duties as editor and has been profoundly impressed by the diversity of procedure in various chapters. It may be that such diversity is wise; on the other hand it is clear that members elected on one standard in one institution will comprise a body rather diverse in character from that elected on a distinctly different basis in another institution.

As to the value of the *QUARTERLY* to the Society the secretary has received many comments from members that vary from the extreme statement of one chapter secretary who wrote that the members of that chapter did not consider the publication worth reading and consigned it unopened to the wastebasket, to the other extreme of the enthusiastic member who regarded it as the salvation of the organization. Probably the truth lies somewhat between the two extremes and the consensus of opinion of the Society as a whole will determine the wisdom of continuing its publication and the form best adapted to its purpose.

It may be appropriate here to make some suggestions regarding the scope of the *QUARTERLY*. Each volume should certainly contain those formal and official items in the history of the organization which deserve permanent record. These are in my opinion:

1. Report of the annual convention.
2. A record of each chapter, including:
 - (a) Meetings held and addresses delivered under its auspices.
 - (b) The name of every new member elected, and a full statement concerning the basis of election.
3. A record of chapter activities, comprising their special methods for:
 - (a) Promoting research.
 - (b) Publication of the same.
 - (c) Personal association of researchers.

4. Articles on subjects bearing directly upon the work of the organization as a whole.
5. Statistics of chapters.

In an organization scattered from the Atlantic to the Pacific there is abundant chance for chapters in one region to grow away from those in another locality, for customs to spring up in one place that are foreign to another chapter, and for influence to be successfully exerted in one community that is lacking because of ignorance of its power in another community. The Society certainly needs an organ strong enough to bind it together.

It is important to note that the space now available in the *QUARTERLY* has not sufficed to print all of the articles of interest and all of the properly prepared chapter reports that might have been sent in. If this other material is to find publication, then provision must be made for a larger publication or for more frequent printing.

In the next place, is it not wise for the *QUARTERLY* to lay emphasis upon the definite means which are taken by various chapters for the encouragement of research? Certainly the maintenance of an organization which has for its function the election of members on the basis of past achievement but does not devote some distinct part of its energy to the promotion of future activities in the research field, is not a realization of the ideals which were set by the founders of Sigma Xi and which have been emphasized repeatedly by various chapters and various members. If Sigma Xi is to justify its existence, must not the encouragement of research be emphasized as a function, and will not this function be more easily and successfully discharged if there is a specific discussion of the means utilized for that end by various chapters? Individual methods have been perhaps only partially tried out in individual institutions. The announcement of these methods and the results obtained would certainly be of service to other institutions that are attempting to accomplish the same end, and the united experience of thirty chapters working under different circumstances in part at least, will contribute in an important way to the general problem of the encouragement of research that is forcing itself upon the attention of the leaders of scientific teaching and investigation, and that is bound to play a larger part in the development of our own country in the immediate future.

In connection with this would come naturally the discussion of the relations which this Society bears to industrial research in private

or endowed laboratories, in business organizations or manufacturing plants, and in experimental stations under municipal or state auspices. I confess it may not be easy to secure those who are in position to write satisfactory contributions to this discussion and are willing to attempt it. Nevertheless, it should be remembered that the *QUARTERLY* is published for private circulations within the Society, and that brief, informal discussions or individual suggestions may be of the greatest value to others who are working on the same problems. Certainly one cannot hope to reach any satisfactory conclusions in which the large body of our chapters can participate unless such discussions are carried on in print. The extreme difficulty of securing a quorum at our conventions for the transaction of necessary business, and the brief time which is of necessity given to such affairs on those occasions, indicate clearly that any more extended discussions of the important problems I have suggested, would be impracticable at that time. Is it possible to secure the general coöperation of chapter officers and members in finding or in preparing articles for such discussion as I have indicated? If so, I feel confident from the many enquiries which have come to my office from various chapters that the printed discussion will be welcome and will serve to stimulate a further interest in and discussion of the problem. It is not too much to say that the specific problems which demand attention, if Sigma Xi is to discharge its duty, are in large part new. If we of Sigma Xi do not grasp the opportunity by aiding in their solution, some other organization or some other agency will do so and will be given that position of responsibility and influence which the discussion and decision of such problems rightly deserves.

HENRY B. WARD, *Secretary*